



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
OFFICE OF THE COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN
UNITED STATES NAVAL ACADEMY
101 BUCHANAN ROAD
ANNAPOLIS MARYLAND 21402-5100

Canc: Feb 21

COMDTMIDNNOTE 5720
JAG
AUG 26 2020

COMMANDANT OF MIDSHIPMEN NOTICE 5720

From: Commandant of Midshipmen, U.S. Naval Academy

Subj: POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF MIDSHIPMEN

Ref: (a) DoD Directive 1344.10

1. Purpose. To reiterate existing Department of Defense (DoD) guidelines and establish policy on midshipman involvement in political activities.

2. Information. Reference (a) sets policy on political activities of members of the Armed Forces. Midshipmen will be held to the standards in that directive and as articulated herein.

3. Action

a. Reference (a) states that active duty personnel may not engage in partisan political activities and should avoid the inference that their political activities imply DoD sponsorship, approval, or endorsement of a political candidate, campaign, or cause. Members on active duty may not campaign for a partisan candidate, engage in partisan fundraising activities, serve as an officer of a partisan club, or speak before a partisan gathering. Attendance at political campaign or election events in uniform is strictly prohibited.

b. Active duty members may, however, vote, express their personal opinions on political candidates and issues, make monetary contributions to a political campaign or organization, and attend political events as a spectator when not in uniform.

c. Social media: Military personnel may generally express their personal views on public issues or political candidates via social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, or personal blogs, much the same as they would be permitted to write a letter to the editor of a newspaper. If, however, personnel are identified by a social media site as military members, the posting must clearly and prominently state that the views expressed are those of the individual only and not of the DoD. Also, while military personnel may "follow" "friend" or "like" a political party or candidate running for partisan office, they may not post links to, "share" or "retweet" comments or tweets from social media or other electronic or non-electronic postings of a political party or candidate running for partisan office. As always, members of the military must also be careful not to comment, post, or link to material that violates the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) or service regulations. Examples include showing contempt for public officials, releasing sensitive information, or posting unprofessional material that is prejudicial to good order and discipline under the UCMJ.

d. The above permissible political activities are permitted only in a military member's personal (vice official) capacity and not in the workplace. Service members may not engage in political activity on government time or using government equipment. Midshipmen are considered to be in an official capacity and in the workplace whenever attending a scheduled Naval Academy evolution, to include, but not limited to, meetings, extracurricular activities, and classes. An exception may be made for political discussion that is part of an organized class educational activity where all participants and observers understand that the viewpoints expressed are strictly personal.

e. Midshipmen in leadership positions shall avoid political discussions with, or state political viewpoints to, or around, their units or individual subordinates. Midshipmen, like all military members, are prohibited from coercing subordinate participation in political activities and must ensure that they do not create an appearance that they are doing so.

f. Current political campaign paraphernalia, such as buttons, bumper stickers, or candidate photos may not be placed in the Federal workplace, which includes Bancroft Hall common areas and individual rooms. Service members may, however, have a reasonably sized bumper sticker on a personal vehicle, even if it is parked on government property.

4. My point of contact is U.S. Naval Academy Staff Judge Advocate/Ethics Counselor, CAPT (b) (6) JAGC, USN, and can be reached at email: (b) (6)@usna.edu or my work phone: 410-293(b) (6). The alternate point of contact is Commandant's Legal Advisor, LCDR (b) (6) (b) (6), JAGC, USN, at email: (b) (6)@usna.edu or work phone: 410-293(b) (6).

5. Record Management

a. Records created as a result of this notice, regardless of format or media, must be maintained and dispositioned for the standard subject identification codes (SSIC) 1000 through 13000 series per the records disposition schedules located on the Department of the Navy/Assistant for Administration (DON/AA), Directives and Records Management Division (DRMD) portal page at <https://portal.secnv.navy.mil/orgs/DUSNM/DONAA/DRM/Records-and-Information-Management/Approved%20Record%20Schedules/Forms/AllItems.aspx>.

b. For questions concerning the management of records related to this notice or the records disposition schedules, please contact your local records manager or the DON/ AA DRMD program office.



T. R. BUCHANAN

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